desires to visit these places has to contact the Missions abroad and they should indicate the places they would like to visit. Therefore there is no absolute restriction and many areas in Assam lik Kaziranga, Manas National Park, Guwahati City, the Kamakhya Devi Temple and other areas are open to the foreign tourists. Only those foreign tourists who indicate their preference to these areas are permitted to go.

SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: I understand from the hon. Minister's reply that the Government of India reviews the situation from time to time. I want to know from the hon. Minister, what was the finding of the last review? Will the hon. Minister kindly state the approximate time for withdrawal of the restriction for groups?

SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED: The Home Ministry would like to simplify the procedure to issue permits for those foreign tourists who desire to visit Assam and other north-eastern areas.

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: Sir, even during 50's, in peace time with regard to Kashmir there was no absolute restriction about foreigners visiting the place. But I think the Central Government would be ending with disastrous consequences of imposing such restriction. Will they grow wise? It is an uncalled for restriction, because foreigners know much more than all of us do about even north-eastern region. So you only suffer in money and tourism. Will you kindly become wise? (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your question wants them to become wise. They will become wise. (*Interruptions*)

SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: It is your Government that has done all the mischief in Assam. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.

*45. [*The questioner* (*Shri Murlidhar Chandrakant Bhandare*) *absent. For answer* vide *col.* 34 infra]

Selection of sponsored serials

*46. SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH:
SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of producers/directors have been included in the panel of Doordarshan for sponsored TV serials;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) what is the policy for the selection of sponsored TV serials; and

(d) by when the Doordarshan is likely to invite proposals from approved producers/directors?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. UPENDRA): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Bir Bhadra Pratap Singh.

Statement

The answers to the questions are given below *ad seriatim* :

(a) and (b) 1304 producers/ directors have been included in the panel prepared by the Government for production of sponsored serials/ series on Doordarshan. These names have been selected by a Committee of experts from out of 5130 applications received from various parts of the country. Some of the selected producers are companies and others individuals.

(c) Proposals for sponsored serials are selected on the basis of the merit of each proposal and its suitability for the medium of Doordarshan and keeping in view the need to:

(i) promote the basic socio-cultural values like unity and harmony; equal respect to all religions; rejection of violence, communal and caste conflicts and tensions; liberation from superstitions and prejudices;

(ii) project the rich cultural diversity of the country; and

(iii) use the medium in such a way that it inculcates in the growing generations the right kind of values, outlook and standards.

(d) No date for inviting fresh proposals has been decided as a number of approved serials are already awaiting telecast.

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: Sir, is it a fact that the scheme for approval of producers and directors for serials was initiated two years ago but that has not been fully implemented in actual practice? Even today the result is that TV serials continue to be preferred and accepted on *ad hoc* basis. Will you, therefore, take appropriate steps to end this *ad hocism* and regularise serials according to the principles whatever you may evolve from now onwards ?

SHRI P. UPENDRA: For selection of serials certain guidelines have been prescribed. The procedure followed is that there is a preliminary committee of officials who go into the scripts, and once they recommend, the recommendation goes before a selection committee consisting of some officials and non-offical, and after that if any appeals have to be made these appeals go before an Appeals Committee. There is a mechanism existing. But if any streamlining is required I will do that as soon as the Parliament session is over. But there are guidelines. There is a mechanism already existing. But some streamlining is necessary.

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: Did the Government consider encouraging realistic rural-oriented rather than false elite subjects for the serials being presented on the mass media in view of the fact that now 75 per cent of TV viewers are residing in rural and semi-urban areas?

SHRI P. UPENDRA: Sir, I do agree with the hon. Minister that ...(*Interruptions*) Sir, habits die hard. (*Interruptions*) I was more at home as an Opposition Member. (*Interruptions*) Sir, I do agree with the hon. Member that the propgrammes on Doordarshan are mostly urban-oriented and we have to do something to project our rural life also. And we will take adequate steps for that.

श्री भगतराम मनहर सभापति महोदय, मंत्री जी ने यह कहा है कि सीरियल मैरिट लिस्ट से दिए जाते हैं, लेकिन अक्सर यह देखा गया है कि कई सीरियल ऐसे दिखाए जा रहे हैं जो कि

निर्धारित मापदंड के अनुरूप नहीं है। साथ ही ऐसी भी शिकायतें हैं कि जब एक ही निर्देशक या निर्माता को कई सीरियल दिए जाते हैं। सबको समान अवसर मिले, इस दिशा में आपका मंत्रालय क्या कर रहा है ?

दूसरी बात मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि निर्माता निर्देशकों का जो चयन होता है उसकी एक समिति आपने बनाई है। तो उसमें कौन-कौन से सदस्य है ? क्या निकट भविष्य में उस समिति का पुनर्गठन करने का आपका मंत्रालय विचार कर रहा है ?

श्री पर्वतनेनि उपेन्द्र : सभापति महोदय, सीरियलों के रिजेक्शन के बारे में कई शिकायतें आई है। उनके ऊपर विचार करने के लिए मैं तुरन्त एक कमेटी को नियुक्त करने वाला हूं और ये शिकायतें उस कमेटी के सामने जायेंगी।

जहां तक नान-आफिशियल्स जो इस आफिशियल कमेटी के साथ हैं, उनके नाम इस प्रकार है—डा. गुरबख्श सिंह, ऐक्स-वाइस चांसलर, दिल्ली यूनिवर्सिटी, डा. प्रीतम सिंह सफीर, रिटायर्ड हाई कोर्ट जज, प्रो. सिडनी रिबैरो, ऐकेडमिक एंड सोशल वर्कर, श्री अक्षय कुमार जैन, जर्नलिस्ट, श्री आर. के. रमगोत्रा, फार्मर फारेन सेक्रेटरी, श्रीमती सत्या चौधरी, सोशल वर्कर, श्रीमती इंदु जैन, एजुकेशनिस्ट, श्रीमती रजिया इस्माइल, सोशल कम्यनिकेटर, श्री सोम बेनेगल, जर्नलिस्ट, श्रीमती कमला वर्धन, डांस, आर्टिस्ट, अरुणा वासुदेव, मीडिया क्रिटिक, श्रीमती मीरा बेन आर्गी, फार्मर यूनिस्को कंसल्टेंट हम इस कमेटी का पुनर्गठन करने वाले हैं।

SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the panel which has been formed by the Ministry has not included the new comers. Those who are already in the profession have been included in the panel. The applications of new comers have been rejected. May I know from the hon. Minister whether new comers will have a chance to produce these serials or not?

SHRI P. UPENDRA: The Panel Committee received more than 5000 applications. Out of them, 1304 were selected to be on the panel. They prescribed a procedure according to which only the experienced people were to be considered. As the hon. Member says, there may be some brilliant Producers and Directors and I think it should be decided on merits. We will try to provide opportunities to the new comers also.

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: This matter was raised last year. I raised it with the various Ministers. The very logic of empanelling, inviting these 5000 applications and choosing 1300, is a distorted logic because production of serials is an art. We have abounding talent in this country. Yet we find that it is the bad quality serials which somehow got into the prime time of the T.V. We have thousands of video libraries and the video viewers will agree with me that there are Pakistani serials in this country which are abounding in wholesome entertainment of very superior quality and which are very popular. I am sure that if most of the Members– I told this to the previous Minister also—check with their wives and children, they will find that they are watching the Pakistani scripts and not their own T.V. serials. Sir, there is no reason why we cannot produce good quality serials in this country. But the policies of Doordarshan and Mandi House have to undergo a sea change. I feel that this empanelment was a retrograde measure Will the Minister consider scrapping this panel of 1304 and having an open-dore policy? Good serials produced by anybody should be considered. There should be

a committee which should have not only experts but also members of general public who are interested in serials. The committee should select serials on merit. Most of the serials today, I am constrained to say, are selected for reasons other than merit, I would like the Minister's assurance.

SHRI P. UPENDRA: Sir, I will first take up the last point of the hon. Member's question. I did receive a number of complaints about corruption in the selection of serials and I am going into them. I have also decided to appoint a Committee to review all those serials already selected without any dislocation in the regular telecast keeping one month's serials undisturbed. I would like to review all the other serials already selected from February onwards. For that, I am taking necessary action. There are people who produce good serials in this country. I do not agree with the hon. Member that our producers and directors cannot produce serials comparable to those produced by Pakistan and other countries. It is not correct.

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA : I did not say that. They can produce. But, will you select them?

SHRI P. UPENDRA : Therefore, we have to encourage good producers and directors. We will take suitable action in that regard. And it is also correct that the serials now telecast in the national as well as regional hook-ups are not of the standard quality. Some of them are really bad. I have received complaints to that extent also.

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will you scrap that 1304 panel?

MR. CHAIRMAN: He will consider it. Shri Ghulam Rasool Matto.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister has stated with regard to the serials that are to be telecast over the national hook-up. But, I know of a case, Sir, when local serials. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: He mentioned local; he mentioned regional also.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: Kindly bear with me. The local serials have been okayed by the respective panels. And I know of a case of a Kashmiri serial having been accepted by the Doordarshan Kendra, Srinagar, two years back. It was sent to Delhi for confirmation. For two years nothing was done although the panel in Srinagar has already passed it. Will the hon. Minister consider that for telecasting local serials in local languages by local stations, decentralisation process will be there and it will not be under the Mandi House clearance that the serials that would be telecast locally will have to be cleared by the Mandi House?

SHRI P. UPENDRA: Sir, we will simplify the procedure keeping, at the same time, if view the need for some checks. If there are complaints localy, they have to come here for review and all that. Keeping that provision, we will try to decentralise the whole procedure.

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE: Sir, partially I am pre-empted by what Mr. Kamal Morarka has asked. But I want to know from the Minister of Information and Broadcasting one thing. Sir, the Indian film industry so far as commercial films are concerned, are far ahead of Pakistan. In fact, when I occupied that Ministry, I visited Pakistan, Sir, one question pointedly asked of me was: How is it that on TV what you are producing is extremely inferior to what Pakitan is doing ? Whereas, Sir, in the commercial film production, we are far miles ahead of Pakistan. It is no use denying the

fact that Pakistan serials are doing much better than us. May I, therefore, know whether he will critically examine what the distortions are in the entire procedure? To me it sounded a little simplistic that first officers examine, then the second set of officers sit and then there is an appellate court. I mean, it must not be an appeal from Caesar to Caesar. It is for a person who is watching TV, Sir, in the hope of seeing something nice. One thing is, Sir, morbid serials are coming. Will you put an end to this at least? Some of the serials are so morbid, I want to submit, Sir, that I am scared to watch. Sir, there are enough miseries in our life already of late. So, I want to know Sir, whether he will at least give some quasi judicial status to this appellate board and remove distortions? And on the floor of the House kindly make a statement that the morbid things will be got rid of.

SHRI P. UPENDRA : Sir, I can assure the hon. Member that all the morbid things and distortions inherited by us will be removed.

MR. CHAIRMAN : And new will not be created.

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the distortions which have crept in the selection of serials is not just in the selection...

MR. CHAIRMAN : You put your question.

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH : Just a minute, Sir: If you will permit me, Sir, I have to make a peroration because I have to first give a preface to what I am going to say at the end Sir, I have to explain my question. You do understand, Sir, that these are new Ministers and one has to give thebackground. So, Sir, bureaucrats arbitrarily decide that this is the serial which is approved. then they arbitrarily decide that this is th time at which it shall be telecast. Sir, the main distortion is in the selection of the time slot because the money which the producer makes is from the time slot. Once it is decided that it is going to go in prime time, when they make the maximum money... *(Interruptions)*. It is there where the main distortion creeps in. Of course, I totally agree with my hon. friend, Shri morarka, when he says that this is absolutely arbitrary and how can you for an art form turn round and say that these are the people we approve of? Do you today say that these are the people we approve of as artistes to make pictures, or some sculptor to make a sculpture? No chance. Similarly, this is also an art form. You cannot put it into a strait—jacket. I would like him to scrap these committees. I would like him to scrap all this and let us have some independent authority as has been proposed which will go into this whole thing and will come out with something. And, therefore, I would like to know from the hon. member, who is at present a Minister, what he is going to do in this regard?

SHRI P. UPENDRA : I agree with the hon. Member that the scramble or the prime time leads to corrupt practices. So, I will take that into account while reviewing the whole procedure and I will draw upon the experience of the hon. Member also. I will take his suggestion also in the this regard